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SUBJECT: US-EU JULY 20 TASK FORCE MEETING

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: At the July 20 US-EU Task Force meeting, both sides emphasized their commitment to implementing Summit declarations. An additional Task Force meeting was proposed to follow-up on the US EU Summit economic initiatives and other issues. EU officials reported progress on their planned Moldovan-Ukrainian border monitoring operation, expressed EU intent to increase civil society assistance in Belarus and sought an update on US policy towards Uzbekistan. EU Officials announced a possible observation mission for Egypt, s November parliamentary elections and encouraged more US-EU dialogue on Israel-PA issues and BMENA contributions. Participants discussed next steps for Syria/Lebanon and Iraq. The EU requested US support for UN electoral assistance in DRC. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) US-EU Task Force participants included EUR/ERA Director Peter Chase and USEU Political Counselor Kyle Scott, who met with UK Foreign Office Deputy Political Director Tim Barrow, Stuart Gill of the UK Presidency, Council Director for Transatlantic Relations Riina Kionka, and Gunnar Wiegand, Head of Unit for US relations, DG RELEX.

ECONOMIC INITIATIVES AND TRADE ISSUES

3. (SBU) Chase said that the White House is keen to follow-up the economic initiative declarations and that there will be strong interest from Cabinet-level officials. Wiegand said that the EU would provide a list of points of contact for each of the different economic initiatives by the end of July and asked for a similar list from the US. The EU wants to see full implementation of all elements of the declaration rather than focusing on just a few; the EU proposed an additional Task Force meeting at the end of September to review the economic initiative work programs. On trade issues, the Commission noted a desire to see USTR participate in Task Force meetings. Regarding the upcoming WTO decisions on biotech and FSC, the Council noted that the January deadline for any subsequent sanctions decisions has a 60-day window for flexibility. The Commission asked to be part of US decision-making on APIS-60 (the Advance Passenger Information System proposal that would compel airlines to send passenger data 60 minutes before flight departure). The EU remains unconvinced on need for the changes, given the potential disruption to the air traffic system; EU hopes US will consider alternative solutions.

MONITORING OF MOLDOVIAN-UKRAINIAN BORDER

4. (SBU) Barrow remarked that HR Javier Solana visited Kiev on July 19 to discuss the EU mission for monitoring the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, s Transdnistria section. Kionka noted that Transdnistria has also expressed interest in participating, but that will not be considered because the EU does not recognize their sovereignty. The EU is sending a fact-finding mission on August 25, after which the PSC will start discussing concrete details of a mission. Barrow promised to keep the US up to date on the &when8 and &show8 of the proposed border monitoring mission.

BELARUS AND UZBEKISTAN DISCUSSED

5. (SBU) Barrow said that the EU is increasingly involved in Belarus and Uzbekistan. On Belarus, the Commission suggested coordinated demarches on donor assistance to civil society to avoid duplication and ensure that the country does not slide into further isolation. Barrow said that suspending assistance to Belarus would not increase leverage in pursuing targets for reform. Gill said that the EU and US must try to influence the position of Russia, which considers Belarus to be in its area of influence. Kionka suggested using the G-8 as an opportunity for conversation with Russia; Chase agreed.

6. (SBU) On Uzbekistan, Gill considered the EU &more forward than the US8 on invoking the Moscow Mechanism and inquired as to US movement, suggesting that &our people in Vienna8 intensify their communication. Chase noted that Uzbekistan is a fast-moving issue and that guidance from Washington needed to be updated. Scott noted that the new OSCE SecGen

was not in favor of invoking Moscow Mechanism; Chase expressed US concern over the issue of Uzbek refugees in Kyrgyzstan. Gill replied that the EU may signal distaste without taking action to change things.⁸

EU MAY OBSERVE EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

17. (SBU) Gill said that the EU will not send an electoral observation mission for Egypt's presidential elections, but are waiting for an invitation to observe the parliamentary elections in November. Gill said that the EU doubted the electoral process would be competitive if Mubarak runs again. Focusing on Egypt's parliamentary elections, the EU hopes that all candidates will be free to campaign and backs the 22 NGOs supported by the National Election Commission. If Egypt invites international observers for the parliamentary elections, the Commission will send an exploratory committee.

ISREAL/PA AND BMENA STILL ON EU AGENDA

18. (SBU) On Israel/Palestinian Authority, Gill said that the EU will need to reflect on what happens after withdrawal and encouraged more US-EU discussion on the Israeli barrier and settlements; he stressed that conditions need to be in place to sustain economic recovery and remove restrictions on movement in the West Bank. Gill said that EU monetary assistance for the process would be equal to that set up by the Commission trust fund.

19. (SBU) On BMENA, Chase asked if the EU would contribute more funds at the November forum. Gill replied that the Forum of the Future is seen as an additional contribution to the current Euro-Mediterranean pledge of 4.4 billion Euros/year and said that the EU would see any other fund as duplicative. Chase asked why the Euro-Med democracy facility cannot be opened to state and private actors; Gill replied that the EU wanted to maintain its own conditions and deepen its relationship with Euro-Med partners. However, Gill agreed with Chase that these alternative ideas should be discussed in upcoming videoconferences.

SYRIA/LEBANON AND IRAQ

10. (SBU) On Syria/Lebanon, Gill noted that Lebanon had finally agreed upon a new government and said, 'Let's hope they can get a reform plan during the UK Presidency.'⁸ Chase asked if progress in the three areas highlighted by the EU Foreign Ministers July 18 (supporting Lebanon's new government and allowing for smooth circulation of goods, supporting the political process in Iraq, and ending support for groups that oppose the Middle East Peace Process) had become conditions for signing of the Syria Association Agreement; none of the EU officials present had an answer, but promised to take a look at it.⁸

11. (SBU) On Iraq, Chase asked for a timeline on the Commission's planned opening of a Mission in Baghdad. Barrow responded, 'Preparations are underway.'⁸ On the International Reconstruction Fund facility, the EU wants the Canadian Chair to be extended to 2006. Kionka said that the EU was not meeting its goals⁸ on police, management and justice training; it is only training 40 rather than the intended 80 people per month. On the drafting of the constitution, the Commission has committed 20 million Euros and said that European experts can be mobilized quickly⁸ once the framework is set; they are being identified and contracted.

IN YEAR OF AFRICA, UK PRESIDENCY FOCUSES ON CONGO

12. (SBU) On Africa, both sides agreed the US-EU dialogue on assistance must be ongoing, since the issues are too broad to cover sufficiently in the semi-annual COAFR Troikas. The EU expressed regret at the minor sums⁸ contributed by the US on democratic transition in the Congo, noting that MONUC (UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) is experiencing a deficit in operating expenditures for logistics, which are necessary in moving the DRC electoral process forward. The Commission asked if the US would consider contributing more and supporting a potential UNSC resolution to extend MONUC's mandate to include logistics, which would cost 85 million Euros / USD 103 million.

Non-proliferation

13. (SBU) Both sides agreed that the work program resulting

from Summit should be carried forward by the CONOPS Troika. Chase noted that US is still awaiting a response to our proposal for a meeting on verification and compliance; the EU said it wanted more information on issues to be raised. Chase noted the US desire for EU to police illicit movement of nuclear materials within its borders and cited the DOE,s recent complaints; Wiegand replied that EU,s role is to ensure that agreements meet EURATOM obligations. The Council said that the EU is supporting the &Melange8 program in Ukraine aimed at decommissioning weaponry, which needed an additional 25 million Euros, and asked Chase if NATO might be interested in assisting; Chase urged the EU Council Secretariat to approach NATO directly.

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ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

14. (SBU) The UK Presidency noted that they hoped to have a good informal exchange at the expected US-EU ministerial in NY; it was also suggested that there be an SLG meeting on the margins of the UNGA. On the US-EU Summit, EU officials considered it a success but suggested that only one document be produced for the next summit, with reports by subordinate groups on their accomplishments during the year and leaders providing consolidated reports on economic and political/security issues.

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